

from the latter position with the distinguished honor of having become the longest-serving warden in the State of Georgia.

However, retirement from his job within the prison system did not slow Bob down. Four years following his retirement he launched his first mayoral campaign and won. He also never wavered in his commitment to the Leesburg Shrine Club, the Peace Officers Association of Georgia, or the many other political and public service organizations in the state.

In addition to being a great leader, Bob is a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and a member and past Layleader of Leesburg United Methodist Church.

Madam Speaker, people like Bob make my job easy, and it is my privilege to honor this man today for his dedication to Leesburg, to its citizens, to the Second Congressional District, and to the betterment of his state and Nation.

MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTION DIGITAL AND WIRELESS TECHNOLOGY OPPORTUNITY OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 4, 2007

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act of 2007. Before I go any further, I want to take this time to personally thank my colleague, RANDY FORBES of Virginia, for his longtime support and hard work on this bill.

This bipartisan bill seeks to improve technology instruction and enhance the communication network systems of minority serving institutions, many of which are located in poor, rural and isolated areas. Further, this important legislation seeks to deal with systemic disenfranchisement within minority communities by providing a means for partnership between MSIs and K-12 schools through teacher education, including the provision of preservice teacher training and in-service professional development. Under this legislation, MSIs are given an opportunity to further focus on disparities in access to quality higher education opportunities and the communities they serve.

Mr. Speaker, as public schools scramble to open for the fall term, principals and superintendents are frustrated by the stress of not having qualified math and science teachers. Just last week, the New York Times published an article entitled: Schools Scramble for Teachers Because of Spreading Turnover, and reported how tough it is to find good qualified teachers to teach science and math in low income neighborhoods. My bill, H.R. 694, will help to produce a new generation of world-class teachers of science and, mathematics and engineers.

Minority Serving Institutions play a unique role in the education of our diverse American workforce. According to a July 2005 House Committee on Science report, 21 percent of all college degrees and certificates awarded to African American, American Indian and Hispanic students are conferred by Minority Serving Institutions. Minority Serving Institutions also help underrepresented students succeed

in all disciplines, science, mathematics, and engineering in particular. For example, of African-Americans earning bachelor's degrees in science, math, engineering or the technology field in 1996, 31 percent received them at an HBCU. Similarly, Hispanic-Serving Institutions produced 20 percent of science, math, engineering or technology bachelor's degrees awarded to Hispanics in 1996.

Minority Serving Institutions have special skills in serving their communities, which include large numbers of low-income or first generation college students. In fact, I am a graduate of North Carolina A&T, as are many of my colleagues here today in support of this bill are graduates of HBCUs and MSIs. Unlike other, larger institutions of higher education, MSIs typically have small or nonexistent endowments and few wealthy alumni. As a result, the ability to purchase and pay for the upkeep of the technology that will prepare these students for the workforce is especially challenging for many MSI.

Developing an educated and technologically literate workforce is an important part of our efforts to compete in an increasingly technology and information-based, global economy. Whether technology should be used in schools is no longer the issue. Rather, the current emphasis is on ensuring that technology is available and used effectively to create new opportunities.

For these reasons, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 694, the Minority Serving Institution Digital and Wireless Technology Opportunity Act.

In closing, I want to especially thank the higher education community who over the past 8 years have tirelessly worked to make this bill become a reality. Specifically, I want to thank Dr. Michael L. Lomax of the United Negro College Fund, Lezli Baskerville of the National Association of Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, Antonio Flores of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, Gerald E. Gipp of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, the Telecommunications Industry Association, Alcatel Lucent, and the many other advocates who have worked on this issue.

IN HONOR OF THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GEVA THEATER IN ROCHESTER, NY

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 6, 2007

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate one of my district's true treasures: The Geva Theater. For the past 35 years, the Geva Theater has been providing world-class theatrical performances to the Rochester area, as well as arts-related workshops and educational programs. From its humble beginnings of lunch-time performances in the Rochester Business Institute building, to its current two-stage home in the renovated Naval Armory, the Geva Theater has maintained a stellar reputation for creative and artistic excellence.

The Geva Theater was established in 1972 by William Sheldon and Cynthia Mason Sheldon. The theater was housed in the Rochester Business Institute. Their first performances

were a series of lunch-time plays in the fall of 1973. In 1982, Geva found a permanent home when the theater purchased and renovated Rochester's historic Naval Armory. Today, the Geva Theater Center is the home to the Elaine P. Wilson Mainstage, which produces seven shows each season and holds 552 patrons, and the Ron and Donna Fielding Nextstage, which houses a two-show season as well as Geva's other educational and interactive programs.

Theaters like Geva are increasingly important in light of studies that show the positive economic impact of arts in the community. "Arts and Economic Prosperity III", a study recently released by Americans for the Arts, found that the nonprofit arts and culture industry in the U.S. generates \$166.2 billion in economic activity every year. The arts industry creates quality jobs, generates billions in household income, and in local, state and Federal tax revenues.

Furthermore, studies like Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development have proved that arts education increases students' cognitive development, motivates and inspires discipline, enhances confidence and inventiveness, and hones communication and problem-solving skills.

There is no greater example of the benefits of arts organizations for local communities than the Geva Theater, which draws over 174,000 patrons annually—more than 16,000 of whom are students. The Big Theater for Little People program allows thousands of students to experience original live professional theater. For each of these performances, Geva also provides workshops for teachers and accompanying study guides to enhance the learning experience. Artists also engage in question and answer sessions with students and are available to travel to schools to continue the dialogue. This type of interactive program has helped provide Rochester-area students with unique and well-rounded arts education experience.

Through its wide variety of educational, outreach and literary programs, including Big Theater for Little People, the Geva Theater truly accomplishes its goals of enriching and deepening the theater-going experience for its audience; providing access and affordable theater to the Rochester community; developing new plays and playwrights; and nurturing the audiences and artists of the next generation. And by recruiting talented actors, directors, designers, and writers at the forefront of American performing arts from all across the country, Geva ensures that it provides its audience with the highest quality performance.

However, given all of the contributions that the Geva Theater has given the Rochester community, perhaps nothing is more impressive than the atmosphere and energy that characterize each show that graces their historic building. From meeting friends at the Geva Café, to the personable confines of the theaters themselves, it is an experience that has thrilled a generation. As Geva moves in to their next 35 years, it warms my heart to know that more generations will be privileged to enjoy the same.